



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

A Nepalese Buddhist Painting

THE Nepalese Buddhist painting (M. F. A. 19, 1432) recently presented to the Museum of Fine Arts by Mr. Edward W. Forbes, illustrates the *Pindapatra* and *Kapisa Avadanas*—two connected tales of edification illustrating the merit of almsgiving. The central figure represents Gautama Buddha, seated in *bhumi-sparsa mudra* (the right hand "calling the earth to witness"); to right and left of him stand two arhats, probably Ananda and Mahakasyapa. Above, along the upper margin, are represented the Five Dhyani Buddhas, viz.: Ratnasambhava (gold, on a green horse, hand in *varada mudra*, the seal of charity); Aksobhya (blue, on a white elephant, hand in *bhumi-sparsa mudra*, the seal of "calling the earth to witness"); Vairocana (white, on a white lion, hands in *dharma-cakra mudra*, the seal of turning the wheel of the law); Amitabha (red, on a blue peacock, hands in *dhyana mudra*, the seal of trance); and Amoghasiddha (green, on a white *kinvara*, hand in *abhaya mudra*, the seal of "Do not fear"). In the centre of the lower marginal series is a seated figure of Prajnaparamita, the goddess of Transcendent Wisdom (red, four-armed, holding a book and rosary), with representations of the donors and accessories of ritual worship to right and left.

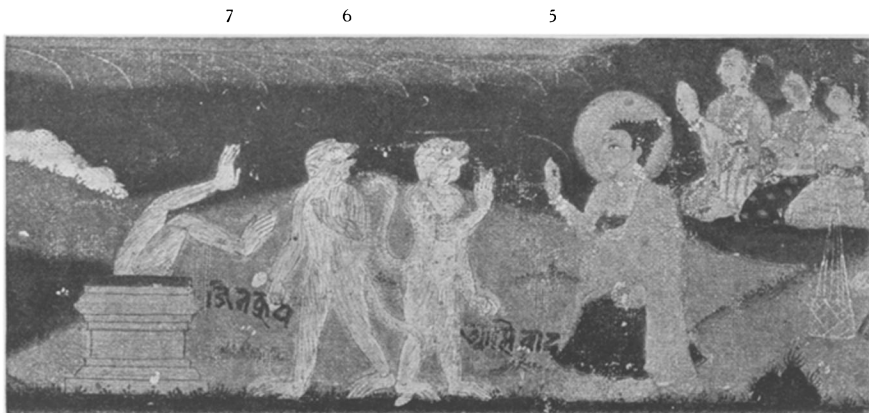
The stories related in the narrative representations immediately to the left and right of the central seated figure may be summarized as follows:

The *Kapisa Avadana* relates that the Lord Buddha, while in the company of a large audience of his followers, was requested by Sariputra to expound the virtues of charity, whereupon he related the following story:

"Once on a time Tatavisuta was born a monkey, Jñanakara by name. In consequence of his sinful character the whole forest was beset with darkness at the time of his birth, and famine raged on all sides. Some time after, Dipankara's



Nepalese painting, detail: *Kapisa Avadana*

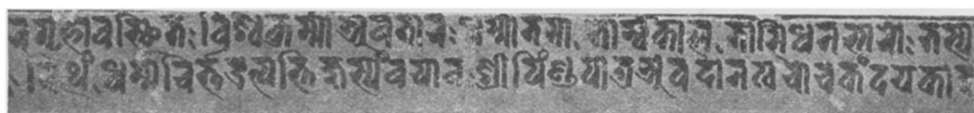


Nepalese painting, detail: *Kapisa Avadana*



Nepalese painting, illustrating the Kapisa and Pindapatra Avadanas. Dated A. D. 1716

Gift of Edward W. Forbes, 1919



Nepalese painting, part of Ranja inscription



Nepalese painting, detail : *Pindapatra Avadana*

presence in the forest restored it to light, and there was plenty of everything. Jñanakara, wondering at this sudden change, gave a jak-fruit to the worker of the miracle. Dipankara gave him instruction in the philosophy of Buddhism and promised him transformation into a man. He learned the character of man from a friend, and, dying, was born a merchant's son at Kamarthi. He was named Dharmasri. When Dharmasri was very young Dipankara, who was passing by, asked him to give the applicant anything that he could afford with good will. Dharmasri gave a handful of dust, which was instantly changed into gold. He gave another handful of dust, which was changed into dainties for the Samgha. Dipankara granted him a boon, saying, 'For this good conduct you are to become Sarvananda, the king of Dipavati.' Sarvananda always used to please Dipankara with food and raiment.** The story-telling was concluded with a discourse on morals, diversified with a description of the Satya Yuga and the duties appropriate to that "Age of Truth."

The Pindapatra Avadana is a tale in praise of giving alms-bowls (*pinda-patra*) to Buddhist monks, and continues the thread of the Kapisa Avadana as follows: "Sarvananda, king of the great city of Dipavati, once visited the great Vihara of Prasanasila, and thence brought the Buddha Dipankara to his metropolis and presented him (with) an alms-bowl full of rice, and thereupon the Buddha expatiated on the merits of giving alms."†

Turning to the actual scenes, which in most cases are identified by captions in Ranja script, we recognize (1) upper right (proper left of the seated Buddha), Gautama Buddha relating the Avadana, (2) Dipankara Buddha emerging from a monastery (the Prasanasila Vihara), and (3) entering a dark forest, which (4) is immediately made light, and where he meets the monkey Jñanakara, who presents him with a jak-fruit, after which (5) the Buddha instructs the monkey,

* Mitra, *The Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal*, 1882, p. 100.

† Ibid., p. 195.



Nepalese Buddhist shrine, detail : *Five Dakinis*

who (6) turns away and (7) inadvertently falls into a well, but is seen again (8) to the left of the well, in conversation with Buddha. He appears next (9) as Dharmasri the merchant's son, at Kamarthi, and next to this (10) making his offering to Dipankara Buddha; above this (11), attending to the discourse of Dipankara; above this (12) in conversation with his parents; above this (13), his parents in conversation; and again above this (14), his parents in conversation, without caption; and last above this (15), Dipankara discoursing to the parents. The subsidiary scenes around the outer edge of the whole picture are connected with almsgiving, but the sequence is not apparent in detail.

The inscription below, in Ranja characters (a Nepalese form of Nagari) is written in a highly Sanskritic vernacular (Nepalese, or Niwari) and mentions the reigning king, Maharajadhiraja Jaya Mahendra Simha, Vijaya Raja. This king, who is also known as Mahipatindra and as Jaya Vira Mahindra, reigned from 1694 to 1722 A.D.; his name is recorded in the Buddhist *Vamsavali*.^{*} This is an addition to the few known inscriptions of his reign. The donors, residents of Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal, are then mentioned; they include one Tanvakala and his wife, Jasadhara Lakshmi, a son and two daughters. Dipankara Bodhisattva and the Pindapatra Avadana are then mentioned, and the date given as Samvat 837 (equivalent to A.D. 1716), the month of Sravana, the thirteenth day of the dark fortnight. The inscription concludes with the invocation of a blessing on all the donors.

Edifying stories of almsgiving by monkeys to a Buddha are of considerable antiquity in Buddhist art. The gift as a rule consists of an alms-bowl containing honey or palm juice. A scene of this kind appears on a Gandhara relief from the Sikri stupa (Lahore Museum: Foucher, *L'art greco-bouddhique du Gandhara*, I, p. 254); as one of the eight leading events of Gautama Buddha's life on a stele from Sarnath (Sarnath Museum: Foucher, *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art*, Pl. 19—here, also, the monkey falls down a well); and in a Nepalese MS. of the *Prajñāparamita*, Cam., 1643 (Foucher, *L'iconographie bouddhique*, I, Pl. s. VII, 1 and x, 4). For further discussion of such scenes and other references see Foucher, *L'art greco-bouddhique du Gandhara*, I, pp. 512-515.

The present painting is an important document of Nepalese art, of unusual excellence for so late a period as the eighteenth century, and representing the continuation of a long and uninterrupted tradition. It is remarkable alike in organization and strong harmonious color as well as for its admirable craftsmanship. Amongst the conventions of particular interest may be remarked the ancient method of continuous narration, where the same

figure is repeated in the same composition in successive moments of the story; the distinction of darkness from light, comparable with the differentiation of day and night scenes in the early Rajasthani Ragmala paintings; and the indication of a city by means of a house and persons within it.

The Museum collection includes three other examples of Nepalese Buddhist painting, as follows:

17.1683. Lamaist assembly of the type Ts'og-sin: a tree, its branches loaded with divinities. On cotton cloth, in full color and gold. The inscription, in Ranja characters, is dated Samvat 916 (A.D. 1795), and indicates that the painting was made in or for the Vaisavarnna monastery, in the great city of Lalitapur in Nepal.

19.664. A representation of a caitya or Buddhist reliquary monument, described in the inscription as the Usnisa-caitya: surrounded by divinities. On cotton cloth, in full color and gold. The inscription, in Ranja characters, gives the date Samvat 979 (A.D. 1878), and mentions the Asaka Mandapa in the great city of Kantipur in Nepal.

17.67. A painted wooden shrine, fifteenth or sixteenth century, containing terra cotta medallions of Buddhist divinities and saints. The painting of the doors and frames is purely decorative, that of the lower part of the doors representing pomegranate branches; but that of the panel below the doors represents five dancing Dakinis. A. K. C.

Siamese Bronzes

THE Museum of Fine Arts possesses four Siamese Buddhist bronzes. The earliest and most important of these — a standing figure of a Bodhisattva, perhaps Siddhartha,^{*} or possibly Dipankara Buddha[†] — forms a part of the bequest of the late Hervey E. Wetzel. The figure is crowned and wears earrings, but is otherwise in monastic garb; the *usnisa* is conspicuous, but the uppermost part of it, including perhaps a flame, is lost; the right hand is raised in *abhaya mudra* (the seal of "Do not fear"); the left, pendent (*lola hasta*); the feet and parts of the robe are lost. The founder has known how to endow his work with a gentle charm and grace, and even with dignity, but hardly with power. In terms of European art it is Gothic of the fourteenth or fifteenth century rather than of the thirteenth century, or Romanesque. The sensitive treatment of the whole figure (and not least, of the hands) and the absence of any hard delineation or reduction of the features to a mere formula, nevertheless show that the figure must be classed as an example, though a late example, of the zenith period of Siamese art — the Sukothai-Savankolok period, 750-1100 A. D. The

^{*}Voretzsch, *Ueber altbuddhistische Kunst in Siam*, *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift*, Vol. V, Fig. 31.

[†]Getty, *The Gods of Northern Buddhism*, Pl. VI, c.

^{*}Sylvain Levi, *Le Nepal*, 11, 261.